

Request for Proposal
And
Charter School Application
For the School Year 2012-2013

May 1, 2012

State of Maine
State Charter School Commission

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Augusta, ME 04333
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Note on RFP time tables

This RFP is for applicants prepared to open and operate a public charter school for the school year 2012-2013. The timetable for this RFP is necessarily compressed because of the legislative history of the statute establishing public charter schools in Maine.

Applicants that are not contemplating opening a school this year should note that for the next school year, 2013-2014, the following will be the schedule:

August 31, 2012	Commission Issues RFP
September 15, 2012	Letters of Intent to Apply Due
October 31, 2012	End of application period
November 1, 2012	Commission begins review of applications
February 1, 2013	Commission issues decisions on applications
	Charter contract negotiations begin

Please address any questions on the timetable for the next cycle to mcsc@maine.gov .

Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to solicit, encourage and guide the development of high-quality public charter school applications throughout the State of Maine. Applications in response to this RFP are for consideration by the State Charter School Commission (the Commission) only. Applications for other authorizers will use such applications and procedures as they may develop.

This RFP/Application packet will guide you through the steps of developing a public charter school proposal. Each section requests information about a specific aspect of your plan and presents the evaluative criteria that reviewers will use to determine whether the application demonstrates the applicant's competence in each element of the Commission's published approval criteria and, as a whole, demonstrates that the applicant is ready to open and operate a successful public charter school.

The Commission expects that successful applicants will demonstrate a number of common characteristics:

- A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns all parts of the proposal;
- A vision of how the program will improve educational and social opportunities for its student population and how that will affect the community;
- Demonstrated understanding of the population that the school intends to serve;
- An educational program that is likely to be effective for that population;
- A commitment to continuing professional education for faculty and staff;
- Facilities and a facilities maintenance plan that support the program;
- A commitment to inviting the participation of stake-holders in the operation of the school, including parents, students, staff and the community at large;
- Strong, experienced school and board leadership; and
- Strong financial planning and management.

Specifically, the Commission is seeking proposals that include innovative curriculum design, scheduling that supports that design and a school calendar that reflects the mission and vision of the school. The Commission is especially interested in schools that address student populations whose needs are not well served by existing public schools.

The Commission is eager to receive well-developed applications from capable school developers who are committed to educating their students well and improving the lives of children and families in Maine's communities.

The Commission will announce one or more sessions where potential applicants may meet as a group with the Commission to discuss the application and the application process and any questions regarding the application or the application evaluation process.

In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this application or the application process, please contact us at mcsc@maine.gov.

Application Components and Guidelines

Note: The Letter of Intent required by the Commission's procedures is not part of this application, but anything in this application that is different from information provided in the Letter of Intent must be noted and explained in the appropriate section of this application.

The application consists of the following components:

Executive Summary: A summary of key information related to the proposed school including proposed location, enrollment projections, application contact information and a description of the mission of the proposed school, its targeted population and its unique programmatic structure.

Narrative: The narrative sections are grouped under the headings of *Educational Plan*, *Organizational and Operational Plan*, *Governance*, *Business and Financial Services*, and *Education Service Providers*.

Within each section there are specific response categories, and each response category includes the following:

- Applicant instructions that inform you of what you are expected to present;
- Evaluation Criteria by which reviewers will evaluate your response; and
- Required exhibits listing attachments that you are required to provide as part of the application. These required exhibits do not prohibit you from providing any other information that you consider relevant and significant for presenting your plan.

Checklist of required exhibits (to be attached to narrative)

1. Executive Summary (Exhibit A)
2. Map of catchment area
3. School Discipline Policy
4. Emergency Response Guide
5. Sample daily schedule for one grade in each proposed division
6. Annual calendar for first year of operation
7. Projected Enrollment Table (Exhibit B)
8. First year staffing chart
9. Staff handbook or employee manual
10. Organizational chart
11. Position descriptions and resumes for key staff
12. Articles of Incorporation
13. Corporate by-laws
14. IRS acknowledgement of Exemption or copy of filed Application for Exemption (Form 1023)
15. Conflict of Interest Policy
16. Governing board resumes
17. Board profile
18. List of officers and committee chairs
19. 3-year budget with grade by grade enrollment projections and staffing projections for faculty and staff positions (Exhibit C – tabs 2, 3, and 4)

20. Budget and cash flow for the pre-opening period (Exhibit C – tab 5)
21. Monthly cash flow for the first year of operation (Exhibit C – tab 6)
22. Certificates of Insurance
23. Room schedule
24. Facility lease or contract
25. Schedule of furnishings and fixtures
26. Transportation plan
27. Education Service Provider (ESP) background information (if applicable)
28. List of schools managed by the ESP and contact information (if applicable)
29. ESP executed or draft contract (if applicable)

Format Requirements

The Application should adhere to the following format:

- Hard copy on white 8.5" x 11" paper
- One-inch margin on all sides
- Minimum 11-point font
- Single-spaced
- Spiral binding or 3 ring binders (no staples or paper clips)
- Narrative shall be in MS Word or compatible software and budgets and cash flows shall be in Excel or compatible software

Application Deadline and Submission

The application package should include the following:

- 10 bound sets
- One clearly labeled unbound original copy
- One electronic version of the application, including all exhibits on a clearly labeled CD

The full application must be received no later than 5 p.m., June 29, 2012 at:

State Charter School Commission
111 Sewall Street, 5th Floor
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

State Charter School Commission
Executive Summary
(Exhibit A)

Applicant Instructions *(All relevant information must be provided as indicated)*

Name of proposed Public Charter School _____

Name of entity that will hold the charter _____

Primary contact _____

Title/Relationship to entity _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone (Primary) _____ Telephone (Secondary) _____

Email address _____

Education Service Provider (if applicable) _____

Partner Organization (if applicable) _____

Physical address of school _____

School administrative unit in which the school will be located _____

Intended opening date _____

Proposed grades and initial enrollment _____

School Description (150 word maximum)

Attach a brief description of your school that includes the mission, grades served and other information that you would like to include to describe the unique program and student body you intend to serve.

Application Certification

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate. I recognize that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation of a charter after its award. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized by the Board to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the organization.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Title (Position) _____

A. Education Plan

The Education Plan should define what students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience with respect to educational climate, structure, assessment and outcomes

A.1 Mission, Vision, identification of targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve

Applicant Instructions

State the school's mission and briefly present your vision for how the school will operate. A mission statement defines the core purpose and key values of the school and informs the public about the students the school intends to serve. The vision statement is a statement of how the public charter school will look once it is operating. The vision and mission statements should be succinct and easy to understand. The mission statement should be reflected throughout all sections of the application.

Describe the school's educational foundation and the culture or ethos. Include an overview of the instructional methods and any research or experience that explains why you have chosen to use this approach with your anticipated student population.

Describe the student population to be served within the catchment area, both geographically and demographically. Describe the community need that the school will meet.

Explain how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and services align with the educational needs of that population.

Required Exhibits

- Map showing outline of catchment area

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrates that the school will meet a community or regional need;
- Presents a clear, focused, compelling brief mission statement that defines the purpose of the school;
- Identifies the school's philosophical approach to educating students; ensures that program elements are meaningful, manageable and measurable, and focuses on improving student outcomes;

- Presents a coherent vision of what the school will look like in 5-10 years if it is achieving its mission;
- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the students the school intends to and is likely to serve; and
- Presents a persuasive explanation of how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and services are likely to meet the needs of the target population.

A.2 Academic Program

Applicant Instructions

Provide a description of the curriculum to be used by the school, including measurable objectives and subject area content and skills for each grade level. Demonstrates how the curriculum incorporates the state's expectations of learning as stated in Maine's system of Learning Results, MRSA Title 20–A, §6209. Discuss the school's instructional design, including the type of learning environment, such as classroom-based or independent study, project and performance-based, experiential, class size and structure, curriculum overview, teaching methods and research basis that will be relevant or necessary to successful implementation of the curriculum.

Describe the methods and systems that teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction to all students. (For core subjects, include sample lessons from two different grade levels that illustrate strategies for implementation of the curriculum consistent with the mission and educational philosophy.)

Discuss how curriculum and instruction needs are reflected in plans for professional development

Co-curricular and extracurricular programs add value and skills to students' lives. Describe co-curricular or extracurricular programs and how they will be funded and delivered. Describe opportunities for enrichment and activities.

Evaluation Criteria

If the school intends to use curricula that have already been developed:

- They should be consistent with the school's mission and education program design;
- Demonstrate how the curriculum incorporates the state's expectations of learning as stated in Maine's system of Learning Results, MRSA Title 20–A, §6209;
- Demonstrate understanding of relevant instructional strategies; and
- Describe how co-curricular and extracurricular programs enrich the learning experience and students' lives and discuss funding and delivery method.

If the school intends to develop core curricula following approval:

- Present a viable plan for development of the curricula for core academic areas and for ensuring alignment with Maine's system of Learning Results, MRSA Title 20–A, §6209 and with the school's mission and values;
- Describe the framework for development of the curricula for core subjects;
- Identify a sound research, experience or theoretical base and foundational materials that will guide curriculum development;
- Provide a curriculum map for core subjects; and
- Describe how co-curricular and extracurricular programs enrich the learning experience and students' lives and discuss funding and delivery method.

A.3 Special Student Populations

Applicant Instructions

Describe the school's plan for educating children with special needs, particularly those with limited English proficiency, those identified with disabilities, and those with 504 plans. Explain specifically how these students will be identified, how the school will develop plans for their education, how their progress will be monitored, and how the school has budgeted and staffed to meet those responsibilities.

Specifically address the Special Education Program by describing the following:

- Plan to conduct "Child Find";
- Types of pre-referral activities to be used;
- Policies and practices to identify students who may be eligible for special education and related services;
- Plan for addressing needs of students who enter the charter school with an existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from another School Administrative Unit (SAU) and in compliance with Maine state statutes and rules;
- Policies and practices regarding the development of IEPs for all identified students;
- Engagement of certified professionals to provide special education and related services through on-staff or contracted service;
- Assurance that every student will be served in the least restrictive environment; and
- Continuum of placements to eligible students.

Describe the school's plans for identifying and successfully serving students with the wide range

of learning needs and styles typically found in non-charter public schools of the sending area.

Articulate how the curriculum/educational program of the school will meet the unique needs of all enrolled students.

Evaluation Criteria

- Describes a comprehensive plan and a commitment to serve the full range of needs of special education students;
- Demonstrates an understanding of and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding the identification and education of students with disabilities and 504 plans by addressing each of the listed categories;
- Indicates a commitment to serving the full range of needs of students with disabilities;
- Demonstrates understanding of and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding identification and education of the likely English language learner (ELL) population; and
- Demonstrates an understanding of and a commitment to meet the needs of all enrolled students.

A.4 Assessment

Applicant Instructions

Describe the school's approach to assessment such as but not limited to data driven, subjective, formative and or portfolio based. Explain how the school will evaluate progress of individual students and cohorts over time, and the school as a whole toward meeting the statewide requirements.

Describe the school's plan for using internal and external assessments to measure and report student progress on the measures and metrics of the performance framework developed by the authorizer in accordance with Public Charter School Law, Title 20-A, §2409 and included in Commission Rule Chapter 2 and the Performance Framework (see Appendix A).

What are the school's policies and criteria for promoting students to the next level and for graduation from the school?

How will the school use assessment information to modify the educational program and improve instruction, student learning and staff development?

Evaluation Criteria

- Aligns with the school's mission and overall educational priorities;
- Demonstrates understanding of the school's obligation to participate in the statewide system of assessment and accountability;
- Presents a clear, credible, and sound plan for measuring and reporting the educational performance and progress of individual students, cohorts, and the charter school as a whole including valid and reliable measures of student outcomes;
- Presents a statement of promotion and graduation criteria;
- Explains how the school will use assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at improving academic outcomes; and
- Demonstrates understanding of and commitment to compliance with assessment requirements applicable to all Maine public schools consistent with state law and relevant policies.

A.5 School Climate and Discipline

Applicant Instructions

Describe the strategies the school will employ to develop and sustain a safe and supportive school climate that supports fulfillment of the educational goals. Explain the school's student behavior philosophy, discipline policy and code of conduct for both the general student population and for students with special needs. The full discipline policy should be included as an attachment if already developed.

Discuss how you plan to address bullying and harassment as a specific issue. How will that fit into your discipline policy or code of conduct, if you have one, and how will staff be trained to be sensitive to the conditions that create or support bullying?

Discuss how staff and students will be engaged in creating and sustaining a learning community atmosphere emotionally, physically, and socially safe. Describe how this climate will support academic growth, development and risk taking that expands learning.

Describe the social and emotional services that you expect will be needed by your students.

Describe how school staff and administration will collaborate in the identification of these needs and the programs, resources, and services that will be provided to meet the social and emotional needs of the student population.

Explain how the school will encourage family involvement and communication to support student learning, and how it will gauge satisfaction with school climate.

Describe how the school will respond to emergencies such as fire, water damage, bomb threat, and other conditions that will require removing students from the property to a safe place.

Describe the school's plans for compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Required Exhibits

- School discipline policy
- Emergency Response Guide

Evaluation Criteria

- Describes an approach to student discipline that is reasonably likely to promote a safe and supportive learning environment;
- Presents legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal and expulsion or a reasonable plan for their development;
- Describes the creation of an emotionally, physically and socially safe atmosphere supportive of student growth;
- Outlines staff and programs that support social and emotional needs of students;
- Outlines a clear strategy for engaging parents and guardians in the life and culture of the school;
- Includes evidence that the school will ensure a safe and supportive environment conducive to learning;
- Describes well thought out emergency procedures; and
- Cites student code of conduct and anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies.

B. Organizational and Operational Plan

The Organizational and Operational Plan should provide an understanding of how the school will be operated, beginning with the governance and management. It should present a clear picture of the schools' operating priorities, delegation of responsibilities, and relationships with key stakeholders.

B.1 School Calendar and Daily Schedule

Applicant Instructions

Present the school calendar showing the number of days the school will be in session and sample daily class schedules showing daily hours of operation and allocation of time for core instruction, supplemental instruction, extra-curriculars, and after-school activities, as applicable.

Discuss the conditions that will cause a school closing and the procedures for notifying families about any such closings.

Required Exhibits

- Sample Daily Schedule for each grade span the school intends to operate (elementary, middle and/or high school)
- Annual Calendar for the first year of operation

Evaluation Criteria

- Explains how the school will ensure that students receive an equivalent number of hours of instruction if it does not plan to meet the state law and rules regarding the minimum number of school days;
- Aligns with the school's educational mission and vision; and
- Provides criteria for school closing days.

B.2 Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Applicant Instructions

In the table provided (Exhibit B), enter the grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter; minimum, planned and maximum enrollment per grade per year for the term of the charter.

Projected Enrollment Table						
Grades	Ages	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
Etc.						

Describe the plan and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures. Explain how the school will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students. What strategies will you use to reach families that are traditionally less informed about educational options?

Include an explanation and evidence to support the enrollment projections. Relevant evidence may include, among other things, the following:

- Community demographic information including homeschooled students (numbers of potential students);
- Documentation of community or family demand for the proposed school such as letters of intent to enroll;
- Enrollment data from schools currently operating in community; and
- The proposed or actual location and catchment area of the school.

Evaluation Criteria

- Includes an outreach and recruitment plan that demonstrates understanding of the community to be served and is likely to be effective, including for families traditionally less informed about educational options;
- Presents enrollment projections that are supported by evidence of actual or potential demand;
- Includes enrollment and admissions policies and plans that comply with State requirements;
- Discusses the demographic information for the catchment area that supports the enrollment projections;
- Presents evidence to indicate that the enrollment projections by grade and school-wide for each year of the charter period are realistic; and
- Demonstrates that the school will meet a community need.

B.3 Staffing and Human Resources

Applicant Instructions

Provide a staffing chart for the school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the charter. Discuss the plan for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff. Discuss how the plan supports sound operation and successful implementation of the school's educational program.

Describe the instructional skills, experience, and professional development that teachers will need to have in order to be successful. How are those needs reflected in the plan for teacher recruitment?

Include a draft of a Staff Handbook or Employment Manual. The Manual should address at least: faculty and staff assessment, salary administration and a description of benefits, including any health care provided, vacations, holidays, sick days and other conditions of employment.

In responding to this section, consider the following questions:

- What strategies does the school have for recruiting and retaining effective teachers?
- How does the school define effective?
- How do the staffing-related budget assumptions align with educational program needs?
- How does the staffing plan reflect the anticipated enrollment and growth of the school?
- How will the school determine appropriate experience, training and skills of non-certificated instructional personnel?

Describe the school's leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.

Discuss opportunities and expectations for parent involvement such as but not limited to volunteering, monitoring their child's education and holding the school accountable.

Required Exhibits

- First year staffing chart
- Staff handbook or employee manual

Evaluation Criteria

- Presents strategies for recruiting and retaining effective teachers that are realistic and reasonably likely to be effective;
- Demonstrates a sound understanding of staffing needs that are aligned with the mission and vision, the budget and with the school's anticipated enrollment;
- Demonstrates a sound understanding of staffing needs with respect to successful implementation of the educational program;
- Presents a plan that is reasonably likely to attract and retain effective staff;
- Demonstrates through staff employment policies that the conditions of employment are likely to attract and retain high quality staff;

- Presents a plan for professional development;
- Presents a performance evaluation plan that ensures growth and development; and
- Presents a plan for parent involvement.

B.4 Pre-Opening Plan

Applicant Instructions

Provide a Pre-Opening Plan that documents key tasks to be completed between approval of the application and opening of the school. Include a schedule for initiation, development and completion of those tasks. Identify primary responsibility by individual or position, and document anticipated resource needs.

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrates understanding of key pre-opening responsibilities consistent with the school's mission and education, organizational and business plans; and
- Provides a detailed school start-up plan, identifying tasks, timelines and responsible individuals.

B.5 Management and Operation

Applicant Instructions

Describe the organizational structure of the school and its day-to-day operation. Explain the management roles and responsibilities of key administrators with respect to instructional leadership, curriculum development and implementation, personnel decisions, budgeting, financial management, facilities management, legal compliance, and any special staffing needs. Provide background information on school leadership and management team members, if identified.

Explain partnerships and contractual relationships central to the school's operation or mission.

Your response should describe the primary responsibilities for each key management position and should identify critical skills or experience that will be priorities for fulfillment of those responsibilities. Give particular attention to the roles, responsibilities and actual (if already identified) or desired qualifications of the school leader.

Discuss any plans for recruiting and selection of the school leader if not already identified.

Required Exhibits

- Organizational Chart that shows the staffing structure and reporting responsibilities for the board, administration and staff;
- Key position descriptions including critical skills or experience of every employee that they intend to hire based on organizational chart (description can be general for core teachers). Qualifications for hiring should provide assurance that fingerprinting and background checks will be conducted in accordance with the law; and
- Position descriptions and resumes for key staff.

Evaluation Criteria

- Clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities for administering the day-to-day activities of the school;
- Demonstrates understanding of management needs and priorities;
- Includes a staffing plan that is viable and adequate for effective implementation of the proposed educational program; and
- Describes how the school leader will be recruited and selected.

B.6 Community Involvement

Applicant Instructions

Discuss your plans for community involvement in the governance and operation of the school. Describe the nature of potential partnerships including examples of how community partners will play an integral part in the life of the school and identify specific organizations with which the school is already working, or likely to partner.

Describe your plans for developing community partnerships and any specific steps you have already taken. Include in your response relevant documentation such as letters of support or commitments to provide or share resources.

Provide evidence of community support for the proposed public charter school, including information on discussions with the school administrative unit where the public charter school will be located concerning recruitment and operations of the public charter school and possible collaboration with nearby school administrative units.

Evaluation Criteria

- Presents a vision and strategy for community involvement that is reasonably likely to further the school's mission and program;

- Describes actual or potential partnerships and provides evidence that anticipated partnerships are realistic and achievable;
- Provides documentation of community partners; and
- Presents a statement of any current and projected relationships with the School Administration Unit where the school is located or nearby SAUs.

C. Governance

The governing board of the school is the entity responsible to ensure that school leadership carries out the requirements of the charter contract. The board is responsible for ensuring that the viability of the school is secured into the future by hiring an outstanding school leader and insisting that key positions are filled with competent staff, and providing adequate resources to support the educational program.

C.1 Governing Body

Applicant Instructions

Describe the entity that will hold the charter and be responsible for governing the school. Provide documentation of the entity's legal status including Articles of Incorporation, By-laws and documentation of legal not-for-profit status.

To the extent that the organization has already existed and has functions independent of the operation of the proposed school, provide a brief description of the organization, its history, its current operation, and the relationship between its existing operations and the proposed school.

Required Exhibits

- Articles of Incorporation;
- Corporate By-laws;
- Documentation that the applicant is a Maine nonprofit corporation and has filed an application for exemption (Form 1023) with the Internal Revenue Service or has a notice of exemption; and
- Conflict of Interest Policy (covering board members and key administrators).

Evaluation Criteria

- Inclusion of proper documentation that the entity proposing to hold the charter is a Maine nonprofit corporation;

- By-laws describe board procedures that are consistent with the need for sustainability; and
- In the case of pre-existing organizations, evidence that the operation of the proposed school is consistent with the organization's overall mission and operation.

C.2 Governing Board Composition

Applicant Instructions

List the members of the proposed governing board including their names, current employment, and relevant experience or qualifications for serving on the board, including, but not limited to, their relationship to the community in which the school will be located.

For each proposed governing board member, the application must include a resume.

Describe the criteria for selecting board members and include any specific plans for recruitment of additional governing board members, including, but not limited to, plans that would involve parental, professional educator or community involvement in the governance of the school.

Discuss how the board members' skills and experience will support their responsibilities for overseeing the school and planning for its future.

Required Exhibits

- Board member resumes;
- Board profile (a matrix of qualifications and experience to be represented on the board); and
- List of officers and committee chairs.

Evaluation Criteria

- The board has the experience and the capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the education program presented in the application;
- Board members represent the diverse skills and backgrounds (profile) necessary to oversee the operation of a school and to ensure that the organization has a clear plan for the future viability of the organization;
- The board has the capacity to oversee the effective and responsible management of public and private funds;

- The board has the capacity to oversee and be responsible for the school's compliance with its legal obligations;
- The board has the background and ability to represent the interests of the community;
- The board is aware of their duties and responsibilities as public servants in accordance with the language of section 501(c)3; and
- Board members will generally have the capacity to found and sustain a quality school.

D. Business and Financial Services

This section deals with managing the business that supports the program of the school. Applicants will be expected to pay attention to the need to manage the business carefully and to report on the success of school leaders in managing that business according to adopted budgets. Without a sound business plan and qualified people to manage against the plan, the school cannot succeed. Reviewers of the Application will want to be convinced that there is a sound plan and a sound financial infrastructure to support the plan.

D.1 Budget

Applicant Instructions

Use the Charter School Budget Template (Exhibit C) to detail the school's estimated revenues and expenditures for the first 3 full years of the proposed term of the charter and for the pre-opening year.

Provide a monthly cash flow analysis for the first fiscal year of operation (July 1–June 30) and for the pre-opening startup period.

Include explanation and discussion of key budget assumptions underlying the budget projections and explain how the budget aligns with and supports implementation of the educational program. If the school anticipates incurring debt for any reason, such as for acquisition of its facility, the budget must address the schedule for debt repayment and the budget discussion should elaborate on the repayment assumptions and plan.

Discuss the school's plans to secure adequate operating capital for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower than expected student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation.

If public funding is not adequate to support the educational program, what are the sources of funds that will make up the difference between expected costs and the state per-student allocation? Describe anticipated fundraising activities and expected contributions.

Required Exhibits

- Budget for first 3 years, including a staffing schedule, enrollment by grade, benefits and other budget assumptions;
- Opening year monthly cash flow analysis; and
- Re-opening period budget and cash flow.

Evaluation Criteria

- Budget priorities that are consistent with and support the mission and vision of the school, including the school's educational program, staffing and staff development and facility support;
- Realistic and detailed revenue and expenditure assumptions, including any fundraising plan and debt assumptions;
- Present viable strategies for meeting potential budget and cash flow challenges, particularly for the first year of operation including adequate working capital and available reserves and/ or established lines of credit; and
- A demonstrated commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school by identifying those operational areas that are most vulnerable to loss of revenue or excessive cost and your plan to manage those vulnerabilities.

D.2 Financial Management

Applicant Instructions

Describe the systems and procedures for managing the school's finances and identify the staff position(s) that will be responsible for financial oversight and management. Describe how the school's finances will be managed and who will be responsible for the protection of student and financial records. Describe the relationship of the chief financial officer to the governing board (board finance committee). Your response should address, among other things, the school's plans in the following areas:

- Development and maintenance of a chart of accounts that complies with accounting standards and supports appropriate financial reporting;
- Provisions for monthly and annual financial reports and an annual audit;
- Description planned or actual financial controls;
- Description of the school's financial policies;
- Description of accounting software, if any, to be utilized;
- Description of required student records and their management;

- Development and dissemination of monthly and annual financial reports; and
- Securing comprehensive insurance policies from a company that specializes in educational institutions.

Required Exhibits

- Certificates of insurance

Evaluation Criteria

- A demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the school's financial management obligations;
- Evidence that the school is prepared to adhere to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Evidence or a system of financial controls to ensure that receipts and payments are properly accounted for in a timely manner and that cash is handled properly;
- Evidence that the software or accounting system to be used is appropriate and its users are fully trained;
- Evidence that the school has or will have appropriate insurance policies in place;
- Evidence that the school has adequate policies and processes for tracking enrollment and attendance eligibility, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunch; special education and limited English proficient enrollment; and
- Demonstrated preparation to meet its insurance, annual audit, monthly and annual financial reports and other key financial management obligations.

D.3 Facilities

Applicant Instructions

Discuss the school's facility needs based on the educational program and anticipated enrollment. If the applicant has identified a facility, indicate the location (street address, city, and zip code) and provide either floor plans or a description including, at a minimum, the number and size of the general and special (laboratories, art studios, etc.) classrooms, common areas, administrative areas, recreational space, any community facilities, and any residential facilities. Explain how the facility will meet the needs of students and support the school's mission and provide an assurance that it will be accessible to individuals with physical disabilities.

Discuss plans to maintain and clean the facilities and provide methodology to determine their

costs.

To the extent that the school has discussed or established specific lease or purchase terms, include the proposed terms and any draft or final contracts. If the school intends to lease facilities from a school district, discuss the status of those plans and provide evidence of any district commitments.

To the extent that the facility will require renovation or 'build out,' describe those plans including anticipated timing and detailed cost schedules.

If the school anticipates incurring debt as part of its facilities acquisition plan, the budget must include a repayment plan, as indicated in the Budget section, above.

If a facility has not been selected, specify potential locations that are under consideration and discuss the process and time line for selecting, acquiring, renovating (if appropriate) and taking occupancy of a suitable facility.

Required Exhibits

- Room schedule (number, size, function, anticipated class size);
- Any leases or contracts; and
- A schedule of furnishings and fixtures.

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstration of a sound understanding of facilities needs;
- Demonstrates knowledge of facilities costs including, as applicable, cost of purchasing, leasing, building, or renovating an educational facility that conforms to applicable health, safety, and occupancy requirements;
- Evidence to support facilities-related budget assumptions;
- Evidence that the school will be properly maintained and cleaned;
- Evidence that the proposed facility will be adequate or present a plan for securing a facility that is appropriate and adequate for the school's educational program, anticipated location, and target population; and
- A clear and compelling demonstration that the school's plan for acquisition and maintenance of a facility is financially viable.

D.4 Transportation

Applicant Instructions

Discuss the plan to provide transportation within the school's catchment area and what transportation services, if any, will be provided to students outside the catchment area. Describe the revenue and expenditure assumptions for the transportation plan.

If the school intends to contract with the local district or any other third party for transportation services, discuss the status of those plans and provide evidence of the third party's readiness and terms for providing those services.

Describe your plans for transporting students with disabilities.

Required Exhibits

- Transportation plan

Evaluation Criteria

The response should:

- Present a thorough, realistic, and cost-effective transportation plan by proposed division, including transportation of students with disabilities;
- Provide specific evidence of third party readiness (if utilized) and terms for providing transportation services consistent with the school's budget assumptions and state and federal laws relating to student transportation;
- Describe the catchment area within which transportation will be provided and what assistance, if any, will be provided to meet the needs of students outside the catchment area; and
- Describe viable transportation options for students, if any, for whom transportation is not to be provided.

D.5 Insurance

Applicant Instructions

Provide evidence of ability and preparation to obtain liability insurance coverage (minimum A-BEST rating) in the following areas:

- Educators Legal Liability;
- Commercial General Comprehensive Liability that also expressly covers field trips and athletic participation;
- Employment Practices Liability;

- Sexual Abuse Liability (separate policy or a separate part of general comprehensive insurance with independent limits);
- Automobile Liability;
- Excess Liability or Umbrella (i.e., bundled commercial general liability, directors' and officers' liability, legal liability, employment practices liability, automobile liability, and sexual abuse liability);
- Workers Compensation Liability; and
- Surety bond for the school's chief financial officer in an amount to be determined based on the cash flow of the school.

Evaluation Criteria

- Evidence of requisite insurance coverage or ability to obtain requisite insurance coverage;
- Evidence of requisite surety bond for school CFO or ability to obtain requisite surety bond; and
- Include evidence to support the budget expense assumptions related to insuring the school such as copies of broker or agency estimates.

D.6 Food Service

Applicant Instructions

Discuss the food service plan for the school. Whether or not the school will provide an in-house food service program, how will students access nutritious meals during the school day?

State whether the school intends to participate in the national school lunch program or provide any lunch or other meals for students. If so, describe the food service plan and explain budget revenue and expenditure assumptions.

If the school intends to contract with a third party for food service, discuss the status of those plans and provide evidence of the third party's readiness and terms for providing those services.

Evaluation Criteria

If the applicant has elected to provide food service, the response should:

- Present a thorough, realistic, and cost-effective food service plan; and

- Provide specific evidence of third party readiness (if selected) and terms for providing services consistent with the school's budget assumptions and state licensing laws.

If the applicant has elected not to provide food service, the response should:

- Present a clear statement of the school's intent not to provide such services;
- Describe viable nutritious lunch options for students; and
- Describe contingency plans for students requiring special foods due to a medical condition.

Evaluation Note

With the exception of related services required under an Individualized Education Plan, charter schools are not required to provide food service for students.

D.7 Closure Protocol

Applicant Instructions

Discuss closure protocol, outlining orderly plans and timelines for transitioning students and student records to new schools and for appropriately disposing of school funds, property and assets in the event of school closure.

Describe student records policy to support orderly transition for students transitioning out of the school.

Evaluation Criteria

- A system of student, financial and asset records that will allow orderly transition in case of a closure;
- A plan for placement of students in new schools that meets their educational and geographic needs; and
- A plan for transfer of assets to entities that meet the requirements of the IRS and state law.

E. Education Service Providers

All applicants are asked to declare whether they intend to contract with an education service provider (ESP). The term "education service provider" refers to any number of organizations that contract with the governing board of a school to provide limited services, except for virtual school providers (see below). The major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are

education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs), and comprehensive school design providers.

After making the initial declaration, applicants should complete the remainder of the section only if the school expects to contract with an ESP. Other applicants should proceed directly to the next section, Community Involvement.

Applicant Instructions

Select the statement that is applicable and proceed as directed:

- We intend to contract with an education service provider. Continue with completion of this section.
- We do not intend to contract with an education service provider. Skip to the next section.

If the school expects to contract for services with an education service provider, discuss the school's decision to work with an ESP, in general, and the selected ESP, in particular. Describe how the ESP's work with schools with similar populations was evaluated.

Describe the planned relationship between the school and the ESP and how that relationship will further the school's mission and program. Provide a clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP.

Describe the ESP's roles and responsibilities in relation to the school's management and governing board. Describe the school's performance expectations for the ESP, and how the school will evaluate the ESP's performance.

Required Exhibits

- Background information on the ESP including relevant performance data for other schools that the ESP has managed;
- A list of any other schools managed by the ESP with contact information; and
- The services agreement as executed between the school and the ESP (or template version if not yet executed).

Evaluation Criteria

The response should present a clear picture of the contractual relationship and accountability between the ESP and the school's governing board that is consistent with the school's mission and educational program.

- A persuasive explanation of how and why the education service provider was selected;

- A sense of how the proposed relationship with the ESP will further the school's mission and program;
- A clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP and evidence of the service provider's success in serving populations similar to the targeted population, including demonstrated academic achievement;
- A clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities between the school's governing board, leadership and the ESP;
- Affirmative statements that the governing board and school leadership are legally and operationally independent from the ESP;
- A plan specifying how the school leadership and the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the ESP, and the internal controls that will guide that process and how the board and school leadership will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations; and
- ESP performance expectations that are consistent with the school's accountability requirements and the means by which the board will hold the ESP accountable for meeting those expectations.

Additional Evaluation Criteria for Virtual School Applicants

In addition to the instructions, required exhibits and evaluation criteria for all ESPs above, applicants for virtual public charter schools must also address the following:

- Present a clear plan to secure appropriate facilities for administering state assessments and a plan for conducting parent teacher conferences;
- Demonstrate how to provide services to English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Have policies and procedures to deal with enrollment, attendance, withdrawal and mid-year transfers;
- Discuss provision of necessary technology to support the program, including computer, computer software, internet connection, etc.;
- Present your plan regarding maintenance and/or replacement of damaged or malfunctioning equipment or software;
- Show how it will monitor and verify student progress and performance in each course through regular assessments and submission of coursework;
- Demonstrate how it will effectively monitor and collect data on enrollment, course loads, credit accrual, and course completion;

- Present effective systems and procedures for validating the authenticity of student work and accurate attendance and enrollment reporting; and
- Provide information and contact information for other schools that are involved in the same program, including schools whose relationship with the ESP has been revoked.